

Inspection of an outstanding school: Woodfield School

Glenwood Avenue, Kingsbury, London NW9 7LY

Inspection dates:

29 and 30 March 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, parents and carers say that Woodfield School has made a big difference to their lives. Pupils make great strides in their personal development.

Pupils feel safe and are kept safe. They told the inspectors that they are very happy. Relationships between pupils and staff are extremely positive. The importance of keeping safe, maintaining healthy lifestyles and having respectful relationships are regularly reinforced in different situations. Pupils know that bullying and other types of abuse will not be tolerated. They are clear about who to speak to if they are worried and they trust staff to sort things out.

Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. The school provides a wide range of interesting opportunities such as swimming, farm school and residential trips. Lessons include regular visits to local shops. This means that pupils have opportunities to broaden their horizons. They practise the skills they have learned in lessons and become more confident.

Parents are positive in their views of the school. One comment, typical of many, was: 'My child has progressed massively while in school, especially in terms of their social skills.' Parents particularly value the wide range of work experience opportunities that are offered.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Staff have a good understanding of pupils' abilities. They have built a curriculum that captures pupils' interests well. They use a range of interesting resources and information technology.

Pupils experience a broad range of experiences beyond the main curriculum. They are helped to develop their social and moral understanding by taking part in activities such as the school council.

Staff, therapists and parents work together to set individual targets for pupils based on their education, health and care plans. Everyone works on these through the year, and in all lessons. The targets are monitored closely and reviewed termly. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. The system for tracking pupils' progress through the taught curriculum is less well developed. More careful thinking about what each pupil really needs to learn in subjects would help pupils know and remember more.

An emphasis on reading for pleasure helps pupils develop a love of reading. Weaker readers are generally supported through a systematic approach to phonics. However, not all teachers are using this approach, and instead they rely on pupils memorising words by sight. This limits pupils' ability to read unfamiliar words.

Work in books is well presented. This helps pupils to critically reflect on their own writing. Pupils take pride in their work. The atmosphere in lessons is calm and supportive. So much so that pupils feel secure enough to listen to advice from their peers.

Leaders have ensured that the personal, social, health and economic education programme prepares pupils for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils learn about appropriate relationships and personal safety in school and in the wider community, as well as online.

Pupils are ambitious. They are able to say what they want to do when they leave school. They can talk about the skills they need to do the jobs they would like. The well-thought-out careers programme helps pupils and parents to make informed choices about next steps.

Pupils can concentrate on their work because behaviour is managed well. Leaders and teachers are clear about the behaviours that they expect from pupils. Pupils understand exactly what is expected of them. They show respect to their friends, teachers and visitors.

Although staff have access to online training for supporting non-verbal pupils, they have had little external, formal or accredited training. This has led to inconsistent use of signing, symbols and communication books.

Governors are mindful of staff's workload. They are working with senior leaders to make sure that the school's improvement priorities are achievable and measurable. Most staff feel that leaders are appreciative of their workload and say that it is manageable. Staff are very supportive of each other. The sharing of resources and good practice enables them to work effectively as a team. Staff speak positively about leaders' support for their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff know their pupils exceptionally well and, because of this, they are quick to identify and help those pupils and families who need it. Leaders check that this support is helping families, and if not, they find other alternatives.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. Leaders carefully consider the training needs of staff and governors and create training opportunities to support them. Because of this training, staff and governors know their responsibilities and ask for information and help if they need them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The system for tracking pupils' progress through subject curriculums is underdeveloped. This means that staff are sometimes not clear about exactly what pupils need to learn and remember. Leaders should refine the assessment system so that it takes account of pupils' progress through the planned curriculum alongside social, communication and emotional development.
- Some staff do not use a systematic approach to phonics when teaching pupils to read. Pupils are then unable to read unfamiliar words. Leaders should ensure that all staff use an agreed approach to phonics teaching.
- Some staff are not sufficiently trained in the communication strategies that pupils use. This means that some pupils are not able to make themselves understood, or do not understand what staff are saying to them through signing, symbols or other strategies. Leaders should make sure that strategies for supporting pupils who do not use their voice to communicate are used consistently throughout the school.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in January 2017.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	140796
Local authority	Brent
Inspection number	10211212
Type of school	Secondary Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	185
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	47
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trustees	Helena Morris
Headteacher	Nicholas Cooper
Website	http://www.woodfield.brent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 January 2017 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There are 188 pupils on roll and 47 students in the 16 to 19 study programme. Pupils join the school at various stages of their education. All pupils and students have an education, health and care plan. Pupils have a wide range of needs including moderate or severe learning difficulties, autism spectrum disorder, and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school uses no alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Meetings were held with senior leaders, teachers and learning assistants. The lead inspector also met with four governors, held discussions with an occupational therapist, and held a telephone conversation with an external consultant who supports the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and physical education. Inspectors visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work, met with pupils to discuss their learning and met with subject leaders and teachers.
- A wide range of documents were scrutinised, including information about safeguarding, the school's self-evaluation, minutes from governing body meetings and information about attendance, behaviour and pupils' achievement. Inspectors considered the school's work to support pupils' personal development.
- There were 10 responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors considered the findings from a recent parental survey conducted by the school. They also spoke to six parents to hear their views on the school.
- There were no responses to the Ofsted online pupils' survey. Inspectors took account of 17 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Francis Gonzalez, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Teresa Neary

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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